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| Title | Wedding |
| Policy # | 04 |
| Expires | When Replaced |
| Issued by | Board of Directors |
| Signed | |

1. History

| VERSION | DATE APPROVED | UPDATED BY | PURPOSE FOR CREATION/UPDATE |
|---------|---------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.0 | | | |
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2. Scope

This policy is part of Grace Lutheran Church and School's organizational policies. It applies to all congregation members, members of the community and employees.

3. Policy

A Christian wedding is first and foremost a worship of God. It begins in His Name: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We ask His blessing upon it. And it is regulated by God's commandments and is only entered into according to His will.

In a Christian marriage, two people come before God's altar to exchange promises of love and fidelity for a lifetime. These are sacred moments. Just as Moses stood before God on the mountain, so too the couple stands upon Holy Ground—Holy because God meets them, redeems them and blesses them, thus making the union Holy.

It is often an unspoken expectation that the Church is obliged and exists to provide wedding services regardless of circumstances. But, a Christian wedding is much more than tradition or sentimentalism. The Christian Wedding is a worship of God. It is not within the Church's ability or obligation to conduct worship services for the non-Christian.

The Pastor of this church is the official officiant of all weddings at the church. Any rostered Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Pastor may be invited to participate with the GLCS Pastor's consent.

Clergy from other Christian churches may be used to read the lessons, provided they are not acting in an “official capacity”, e.g. robed or vested. Only the Pastor may preach and officiate for the marriage ceremony.

The wedding service music should focus on keeping reverence, observed upon entering the House of the Lord. Therefore, the Pastor must approve all music used during the ceremony.

Counseling is a required part of marriage preparation. On average, eight counseling sessions with the Pastor are scheduled—more if needed.

It is expected that the members of the wedding party and guests will conduct themselves in a manner befitting the atmosphere of a place of worship. Prior to the rehearsal and the wedding, we expect the members of the wedding party to refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages in the church building. Smoking is not permitted in the church building or campus anywhere or at any time. Responsible use of alcohol may be permitted in a reception in the parish hall with prior approval.

The marriage policy of Grace Lutheran Church and School, a member congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is and always has been consistent with the Synod’s beliefs on marriage. We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24-25), and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Ephesians 5:32). The official position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as set forth in 1998 Resolution 3-21 (“To Affirm the Sanctity of Marriage and to Reject Same-Sex Unions”), is that homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Leviticus 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:9-10) as contrary to the Creator’s design (Romans 1:26-27). These positions and beliefs can be found on the LCMS website, along with other statements, papers and reports on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex civil unions and “marriage.” Our pastors will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.

4. Procedure

1. A GLCS Wedding Reservation form is submitted to the church office.
2. The pastor will review the wedding date requested and contact the wedding party to arrange the premarital counseling—at least eight weeks are required
3. Where one party is not LCMS, the couple must go through an abbreviated Adult Catechism class with the pastor—at least four weeks are required
4. The last meeting for premarital counseling will be to decide upon music and other logistics

5. Forms

1. GLCS Wedding Reservation Form
2. GLCS Wedding Manual
3. GLCS Wedding Certificate